

**AMENDMENTS****In the Claims**

Please amend the claims of the present application as set forth below. A  
 5 detailed listing of all claims has been provided. A status identifier is provided  
 for each claim in a parenthetical expression following each claim number.  
 Changes to the claims are shown by strikethrough (for deleted matter) or  
 underlining (for added matter).

10 Claims 1-26 were pending at the time of the Office Action.

Claims 1-26 are rejected.

No claims are canceled by the current response.

Please amend claims 1, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 20, 21, 23, 24, and 25, from the  
 following list of claims 1-26 which remain pending:

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1. (Currently amended) A media holddown device comprising:  
 a platen;  
 a plurality of vacuum chambers for applying a negative pressure to a  
 media positioned on the platen;

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a hollow vacuum conduit connected to said vacuum chambers; and  
 a vacuum source connected to said hollow vacuum conduit, said vacuum  
 chambers being part of a first component and said hollow vacuum conduit  
 being part of a second, separate component.

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2. (Original) A device according to claim 1, wherein the first  
 component is of a different material from the second component.

3. (Original) A device according to claim 1, wherein the platen is of the same material as the first component.
4. (Original) A device according to claim 1, wherein the first component is of plastics material and the second component is of sheet metal.
5. (Original) A device according to claim 1, wherein the first component comprises a plurality of sub components arranged along a single second component.
6. (Original) A device according to claim 1, wherein the first component has a plurality of chambers extending along its length and separated by transverse dividing walls.
7. (Original) A device according to claim 1, wherein the first component has a plurality of chambers in the direction of its width separated by one or more intermediate longitudinal walls.
8. (Currently amended) A device according to claim 6, wherein said chambers have a plurality of openings in communication with said hollow vacuum conduit, the number, size and pattern of arrangement of said openings being selected in dependence upon desired air flow characteristics.
9. (Currently amended) A device according to claim 7, wherein said chambers have a plurality of openings in communication with said hollow vacuum conduit, the number, size and pattern of arrangement of said openings being selected in dependence upon desired air flow characteristics.

10. (Original) A device according to claim 1, wherein the second component is a structural beam of the device.

5 11. (Currently amended) A media holddown device comprising:  
a platen; and  
a plurality of vacuum chambers for applying a negative pressure to a media configured to advance across the platen, wherein for at least part of the length of the platen, said vacuum chambers are arranged one behind the other  
10 in the direction of media advance and are connected to a same vacuum source through a hollow vacuum conduit.

12. (Original) A device according to claim 11, wherein the chambers are arranged in rows perpendicular to the direction of media advance.

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13. (Currently amended) A device according to claim ~~11~~ 12, wherein ~~the vacuum chambers are connected to said vacuum source by a vacuum conduit;~~ one or more openings in each chamber communicating with the hollow vacuum conduit, the arrangement being such that the number and/or  
20 size and /or pattern of openings differ between the rows of chambers.

14. (Currently amended) A media holddown device comprising:  
a platen; and  
a plurality of vacuum chambers for applying a negative pressure to a  
25 media positioned on the platen with respective walls separating adjacent pairs of chambers along the platen, the chambers being connected via respective paths and through a hollow vacuum conduit to a vacuum source capable of

applying a negative pressure  $p$ , wherein said walls are positioned so that, for substantially all widths of media extending from one end of the platen towards the other, the lowest negative pressure applied to the media does not fall below  $q$ , where  $q$  is smaller than  $P$ .

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15. (Original) A device according to claim 14, wherein for selected widths of media the arrangement is such that the lowest negative pressure applied to the media does not fall below  $r$ , where  $r$  lies between  $q$  and  $p$ .

10 16. (Original) A method of determining where to locate chamber-separating dividing walls between the vacuum chambers of a media holddown device, said method comprising:

arranging the chambers and the walls along a platen in a manner to substantially ensure that a sufficient negative pressure is substantially always applied by a vacuum source to a media positioned on the platen whatever the width of the media; and

arranging said chamber-separating dividing wall at a location or adjacent where the negative pressure would otherwise drop below a predetermined value  $q$  for a media having a corresponding width.

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17. (Original) A method according to claim 16, further comprising:

locating dividing walls at one or more locations corresponding to pre-selected widths of media; and

omitting said dividing wall arranging step if said dividing wall arrangement would coincide with or be substantially close to one of the dividing walls located in said preliminary step.

18. (Original) A method according to claim 16, further comprising:  
 constituting a component forming the vacuum chambers by a plurality  
 of sub-components having end walls and extending along the platen; and  
 omitting said chamber-separating dividing wall if said chamber-  
 5 separating dividing wall would coincide with or be substantially close to a said  
 end wall.

19. (Original) A method according to claim 18, wherein the sub-  
 components each have end connection regions separated from the rest of the  
 10 sub-component by end region dividing walls, said method further comprising  
 omitting said chamber-separating dividing wall if said chamber-separating  
 dividing wall would coincide with or be substantially close to said end region  
 dividing wall.

15 20. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 16, further  
 comprising:  
 connecting the vacuum chambers by one or more respective openings to  
 a hollow vacuum conduit which is connected to the vacuum source; and  
 determining the relative sizes of the openings to assist in ensuring that  
 20 sufficient negative pressure is substantially always applied.

21. (Currently amended) A media holddown device comprising:  
 a platen;  
 and a plurality of vacuum chambers for applying a negative pressure to a  
 25 media positioned on the platen with respective walls separating adjacent pairs  
 of chambers along the platen, the chambers each being connected via one or  
 more respective openings to a hollow vacuum conduit which is connected to a

vacuum source, wherein the number, size and/or pattern of said openings are different for at least some of said chambers.

22. (Original) A device according to claim 21, wherein the platen has  
5 holes, at least some of which have a cross-section which is asymmetrical.

23. (Currently amended) A hard copy apparatus comprising:  
a media holddown device including a platen, a plurality of vacuum  
chambers for applying a negative pressure to a media positioned on the platen,  
10 a hollow vacuum conduit connected to said vacuum chambers, and a vacuum  
source connected to said hollow vacuum conduit, said vacuum chambers being  
part of a first component and said hollow vacuum conduit being part of a  
second, separate component.

15 24. (Currently amended) A hard copy apparatus comprising:  
a media holddown device including a platen and a plurality of vacuum  
chambers for applying a negative pressure to a media positioned on the platen  
with respective walls separating adjacent pairs of chambers along the platen,  
the chambers each being connected via one or more respective openings to a  
20 hollow vacuum conduit which is connected to a vacuum source, wherein the  
number, size and/or pattern of said openings are different for at least some of  
said chambers.

25. (Currently amended) A hard copy apparatus comprising:  
25 a media holddown device including a platen and a plurality of vacuum  
chambers for applying a negative pressure to a media advancing across the  
platen, wherein for at least part of the length of the platen, said vacuum

chambers are arranged one behind the other in the direction of media advance and are connected to a same vacuum source through a hollow vacuum conduit.

26. (Original) A device according to claim 1, wherein the platen has  
5 holes, at least some of which have a cross section which is asymmetrical.